

The

SCAM

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Wave of the Future?

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SPACE COAST AREA MENSA



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All submissions must be received by the Editor before the 10th of the month preceding publication. Please allow extra time for mailed submissions, which may be **typed** or **legibly handwritten**. Whenever possible, we prefer submissions via e-mail. They may be in e-mail text or any of most **word processing** formats. All submissions should be sent to the **Editor**, whose contact information appears on Page 2.

Page Three

Mike Moakley, Editor

One sure sign of advancing age is the passing of those who have become familiar figures in our lives. This is true whether it is the death of a loved one, friend, business associate...or someone we don't personally know, but for some reason we've come to admire. Such was the case for me about a week before I wrote this column.

In this particular instance, I was skimming through Florida TODAY, when I noticed a short article tucked on Page 8A entitled, "Columnist Buchwald Announces Own Death". Art Buchwald passed away at the age of 81.

I was first "introduced" to Art Buchwald back in 1971 when I received as a gift his book, Getting High in Government Circles, which is a collection of many of his syndicated columns. Later, to my delight, I found Buchwald's twice weekly column in my local newspaper, Newsday. In my opinion, Buchwald had the rare talent of being a humorist, political commentator and writer of fiction. I have come to be entertained with his wit, informed in politics, and inspired to try my own hand at writing. Although I never personally knew Art Buchwald, I will certainly miss him.

I am certain I will not be the next Buchwald, and that's fine by me. Every writer, amateur (as I am) or professional, should develop his or her own unique style. Nonetheless, Art Buchwald has, and will continue to, inspire my own attempts.

Why do I write this here? It is because part of the mission of The SCAM is to help develop the writing talents of our members, be they beginners or accomplished authors showing the rest of us the way.

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The SCAM sells classified ad space. SCAM members, non-commercial, no charge. Others: \$20 full page; \$10 half-page; \$5 quarter-page per month, we offer discounts for multiple insertions, and we can help with layout and design.

Subscriptions: SCAM members, included in dues; others, **\$10** for 12 issues.

Reclaimed water is wastewater that has been treated and purified for reuse, rather than discharged into a body of water. It is frequently used to irrigate golf courses and parks, fill decorative fountains. It can also be used to irrigate crops, as long as they will be peeled or boiled before human consumption.

Treated effluent from wastewater treatment facilities is typically discharged directly into a stream, river, or other body. This recharges the water supply and promotes the natural decomposition of materials in the water that standard treatment practices would not normally be able to remove. But due to increasing population and increasing demand for reliable fresh water sources, many areas around the world are now using reclaimed water to decrease potable water demands.

In a basic sense, reclaimed water is treated effluent that—instead of being discharged into a natural body of water—is treated to a higher degree and is used for a broad range of practical purposes, most commonly irrigation.

Many cities across the United States have exercised the use of reclaimed water as a result of discharge restrictions or low fresh water supplies. Arid climates, high populations, and close proximity to oceanic saltwater intrusion have been the most proactive of all the users of reclaimed water.

The costs involved with reclaimed water typically exceed those of standard potable water in most regions of the world, where a fresh water supply is plentiful. However, in areas where supplies of fresh water are limited, treating wastewater for reuse is becoming an economically attractive option, because it conserves drinking water. This is why many cities in Florida make use of reclaimed water. The City of St. Petersburg was the first major municipality in the United States to begin large scale production and distribution of reclaimed water in the 1970's.

Reclaimed water is usually sold to citizens at a cheaper rate than standard drinking water. It also contains slightly higher levels of nitrogen and phosphorus than potable water, which help fertilize plants when used for irrigation.

Some cities using water from rivers are using water that contains effluent discharged from upstream sewage treatment plants. This phenomenon is observed in the United States, where the Mis-

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Mississippi River serves as both the destination of wastewater facility effluent and the source of potable water. Reclaimed water is not directly mixed with potable (drinking) water for several reasons:

- Humans may face psychological barriers against drinking reclaimed water, since it was formerly sewage.
- Small amounts of pathogens and pharmaceutical chemicals are able to pass through the filtering process, potentially causing danger to humans. Modern technologies such as Reverse Osmosis are helping to overcome this problem.
- Many utilities providing reclaimed water for non-potable uses do not treat the water to drinking water standards.

Because of this, regulatory agencies ban people from drinking, bathing in or filling swimming pools with reclaimed water. Those who irrigate their lawn or plants with reclaimed water should place a sign on their property warning people not to drink from the irrigation system, and reclaimed water should not be sprayed directly on fruits or vegetables that are not cooked or peeled before eating.

Some municipalities are now investigating either potable or indirect potable use of reclaimed water. For example, reclaimed water may be pumped into reservoirs where it will mix with (and be diluted by) rainwater. This mixture of rainwater and reclaimed water could then be treated again, and finally used as drinking water. This technique may also be referred to as groundwater recharging or reservoir augmentation.

Reclaimed water is distributed with a dual piping network that keeps reclaimed water pipes completely separate from potable water pipes. In the United States, reclaimed water is always distributed in lavender purple pipes to distinguish it from potable water.

In many cities using reclaimed water, it is now in such demand that consumers are only allowed to use it on assigned days. Some cities that previously offered unlimited reclaimed water at a flat rate are now beginning to charge citizens by the amount they use.

Editor's Note: Roger Mansfield is the Reclaimed Water Coordinator for the City of Melbourne. The City provides reclaimed water for irrigation of its golf courses and several highway medians. Other users include businesses near the Melbourne International Airport as well as residential customers in several developments in North Melbourne.

It was dark and wet when I got back from the store. The porch light was off, about my only contribution to the global warming debate.

I opened the trunk and gathered the shopping bags together into two piles, one for each hand. A touch of shopping bag on the finely-balanced trunk lid was all it took to start its descent. Of course, it wasn't always like that. Years ago, when it was new, I would walk away and the trunk lid would open by magic. These days, the struts were tired and sometimes, when it was cold, refused to keep the trunk open for more than a few seconds.

So I didn't bother to look back, and a few steps up the front walkway was rewarded with a comforting gentle thud. And then another noise, closer, in front of the car and to my left. I turned sharply, shopping bags swinging and I listened intently as the rustling polycarbonate of the bags settled down. Nothing there; probably a cat. Or a raccoon. Or a gator. Or a bobcat. There are panthers around here as well. And possums. And armadillos. Not to mention the wildlife that finds its way into the house.

There are bushes to the left of my front door. Rather, the porch extends sideways and to the front there are two palm trees surrounded by azaleas, bracken and plenty of weeds. That side of the porch always struck me as pointless, it's a path that goes nowhere. I tried a few potted plants, but they were hidden by the bushes so these days it just collects dirt. It always annoys me during the day, but fortunately it was dark and tonight I didn't have to look at it.

The noise was there again as I lowered the shopping bags to the floor. A motorbike whined in the distance and my exhaust creaked as it cooled down. I froze, hand in my pocket and hesitated before deciding it was nothing and extracting the keys.

The new lock was sometimes stiff, being only a year old. The entire front door and the window next to it was a gift from Hurricane Jeanne. Of course, it was annoying at the time, but the new front door has nice lead crystal windows and it's not made of wood like the old door so it doesn't swell up and jam on every humid day.

This time, the lock opened smoothly and I pushed the door open, stepping back for the shopping bags.

At that point, a cold clammy hand slapped across my eyes. I lashed out with my left arm, then my right, but failed to make contact. Despite the shock of being mugged on my own doorstep, I was

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St. Patrick's Day is the uncontested winner for "Holiday with the Most Loyal (and loud and raucous and drunk) Core Following."

I'm not entirely sure St. Patrick's Day was originally a strategic gimmick to kick-start beer sales in the spring, or an attempt to slide a minor holiday into March, in case really nice weather permits the wealthy to open their summer cottages early.

The original St. Patrick (not to be confused with the little green man to be mentioned later) was a very influential and "connected" guy, who supposedly rid Ireland of snakes. There is some dispute over this, as scientists have since agreed that pre-ice-age continental drift is a more likely explanation of the dearth of snakes on the island. But it's probably a good thing that nobody tried to pin THAT one on him, as it probably would have counted as heresy or something.

Nonetheless, this proves once again, that it's not what you DO that's important, it's who you know. And if you know somebody high enough in the chain of command that can pass a convincing rumor that you're responsible for some huge fortunate coincidence, you're pretty much set for life. At least in the beer department.

Anyhow, as we celebrate St. Patrick's Day today - it may just as well be named "St. Beer's Day" except that it comes with an odd dress code. As any school kid knows, if you don't wear green on March 17th you get tortured. Not ONE of those kids has any idea WHY this is the case, except that the older kids pounded it into their

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still able to react. He must be behind me. Still blind, I swung around and simultaneously flailed with both arms in a groping windmill volley followed by an attempted half-remembered karate kick.

It was the kick that did most of the damage. I spun half a turn on the damp tiles and stumbled, half falling and half sitting on the shopping bags.

I got my breath back, then, slowly and carefully grabbed hold of one foot and peeled the frog off my face.

These days we enter through the garage.

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heads in years gone by. Lest you start feeling a bit superior to these silly youngsters, this is the exact same reason we still have an income tax in the United States.

As recently as ten years ago, St. Patrick's Day dress code violations were traditionally punishable by pinching. But as that is politically incorrect these days, on account of the sexual harassment witch-hunt, stabbings and shootings seem to have come into vogue.

Besides blatant violence based on shirt color (a staunch Irish tradition if there ever was one,) we also have St. Patrick's day to thank for having food coloring come in "four packs." As just about any Kindergarten can tell you, you can mix a little blue and a lot of yellow, and get a perfectly respectable green. But put enough beer in somebody, and they're bound to botch it. Thus, the Irish lobbyists convinced the major food coloring manufacturers to include green, on the grounds that most people weren't smart enough to notice that green isn't a primary color anyway.

In fact, in 1959, this thinking became so prevalent that green was awarded an honorary "primary" position, by the "Color-Blind-So-We-Don't-Care-Anyway" contingent. Which had some hefty political clout back then, and is by all accounts primarily responsible for standardizing the "shades of gray" thinking we take for granted in our most crooked socio-political circles today.

Moving right along...

That whole thing about four-leaf-clovers, as we now know, was a ploy by our parents to keep us occupied at picnics so they could have some peace and quiet. The luck, it would seem, was on their side, for being able to snow us for so long.

And the only other major St. Patrick's Day phenomenon that begs to be addressed is the occasional but timely occurrence of a rainbow. Which has the unlikely side effect of producing a small green man with large hat and a pot of gold (or gold-colored coins, as the case may be,) and who will summarily hand it over, so the tale goes, if you kiss some rock. This sounds remarkably like someone daring me to lick a flagpole in the dead of winter.

I'll just take a beer, thanks. Green.

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Originally envisioned as a colonial top sail schooner, Boston shipwright Benjamin Hollowell laid the Sultana's keel in 1767. Though built as a combination cargo schooner/yacht, realizing her excellent seaworthiness, her owners sent her to England. In March, 1768 the Royal Navy Architects surveyed her and found her to be "well wrought and put together." The Royal Navy purchased her and with her overall length of 97 feet, she became the smallest schooner ever to be registered on Royal Navy lists. In refitting her, she was modified to carry six to eight 3-pounder cannons and eight swivel guns on her quarter deck railings. Special attention was given to the "set" of her masts and fore and main topsails were added. Because of those sleek, fore and main topsails combined with her relatively small size, the Sultana proved to be extremely fast and maneuverable, especially in light winds and/or shallow waters.

The British Parliament had just passed the Townshend Acts aimed at forcing the colonies to pay duties on lead, paint, paper, and – of course – tea. With her added topsails, the Sultana was easily able to overtake merchantmen laden with cargo destined for the colonies. To this end, after fitting her as a revenue/dispatch schooner, the Royal Navy returned the Sultana to America where she successfully patrolled the east coast from Halifax to the Chesapeake for four years. Reflecting the colonists' anger at the revenue cutters (and I suspect stirring the "political" pot at the same time) Ben Franklin "hypothetically" observed, "how a Government (Britain) would scour with armed boats every bay, harbor, river, creek, cove or nook throughout the coast of the colonies; stop and detain every coaster, every wood boat, every fisherman, tumble their cargoes and even their ballast inside out and upside down and if a penn'orth (penny's worth) of pins were found, let the whole boat be seized and confiscated. Thus shall the trade of the colonists suffer more from their Friends in time of peace than it did from enemies in war."

As the Revolutionary War neared, the Royal Navy, recognizing the Sultana's limits as a warship, wisely ordered her back to England where she was sold out of the Navy and returned to private commercial activities.

It took Master Hollowell approximately one year to finish the 97 foot Sultana. Why then did it take me approximately 30 years to finish a wooden 17-inch scale model of the Sultana? Well, it went something like this. From 1958 to 1968, I lived in Panama. During

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that time I “dabbled” a bit in period wood ship model building. Even though wooden ship model plans, supplies, materials and kits are extremely rare in Latin America, I managed to keep the pointy ends away from the square ends and made fairly decent (if rustic) replicas of the Santa Maria, a Viking Longboat and the Mayflower. In 1968, we moved to Bogota, Colombia and I let my model building slide, dedicating what leisure time I had to lake fishing, archeological excavation, and photography. During a home-leave trip in 1974, I spotted a Model Shipways scale model kit of the Sultana. The kit contained all of the materials necessary to build a 17-inch model of the Sultana, and I had already accumulated (from my previous modeling attempts) all of the wee little tools I would need...so, the Sultana kit accompanied me back to Bogota. It was a solid hull kit so I didn't have to worry about framing and planking. After careful filing and sanding, I got the hull about right, or as older seamen would say, “her lines were fair.” Next was the decking, which came in a single sheet a little wider than the model. I cut, shaped and glued the main and quarter decks and then (following the instructions) I took a sharpened No.2 lead pencil and drew a line in the grooves (fore to aft) which represented the tar used in the original ship. Deck planks were originally laid with a 3/8 inch gap between them to allow space for the caulking iron. The gaps were then caulked with oakum (loosely twisted hemp or jute fiber impregnated with tar).

About this time (February 1975) the ever fickle finger of fate intervened. I suffered a cerebral event and subsequent med-evac to the States. Comprehensive exams by noted neurological specialists were unable to determine just what was going on, but the consensus was that my weight +/- 235 pounds, plus Bogota's altitude (8000 feet), plus my active lifestyle did not add up to a healthy future. Unfortunately, Dr. House wasn't around then to work his diagnostic miracles. So, Sultana joined other paraphernalia in one of the packing-out cartons and we all headed for northern Virginia. Twenty years later, I retired and we relocated here to Rockledge. During those twenty years, due to a variety of reasons (including the hectic pace of life in the US, lack of comfortable work space, procrastination and yes, even laziness) I never got around to unpacking that particular carton. So, it appeared that Sultana would have to be renamed, “Rip Van-Sultana.” In fact, that carton sat in our garage here for another ten years while I dedicated myself to the computer, our swimming pool and my annual pass to Disney World. Finally,

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Fabrics of the Cosmos:

From the introduction to the fourth edition of *The Official Scrabble® Players Dictionary*: “Words that are not permissible in SCRABBLE® crossword games have not been included ... [P]roper names ... have been omitted.” This means you can’t play “Alaska” (the state) or “Swiss” (the nationality), right? Well, not quite. OSPD4 defines ALASKA as “a heavy fabric” and SWISS as “a cotton fabric.”

In fact, many definitions in this dictionary are of the form “a _____ fabric.” Here are a few: ALAMODE - silk, BATISTE - sheer, ETAMINE - loosely woven, LINSEY - coarse, MELTON - heavy woolen, OILSKIN - waterproof, and TRICOT - knitted. These examples were chosen partly for variety, but also because there is a good chance that one of these words or its plural might be on your rack: Each word contains only one letter that occurs fewer than four times in a fresh bag of one hundred tiles. If you can find a place to play one of these words using all seven tiles on your rack, you have earned that fifty-point bonus for your “bingo.” ALASKAS and SWISSES can also be categorized this way, but getting three As is somewhat unlikely (although the times that you have more than two of the same vowel on your rack might stick out in your mind) and getting all four Ss at the same time is **very** unlikely. If you have this many Ss on your rack, you might consider playing one off to pluralize a word already on the board -- maybe ZIBELINE, “a soft fabric.”

Other words are defined as “a fabric _____,” such as: ALLOVER - having a pattern extending over the entire surface, BUNTING - used for flags, CLOQUE - with an embossed design, FIBRANNE - made of spun-rayon yarn, IKAT - of tie-died yarns, JACQUARD - of intricate weave, LINEN - woven from the fibers of flax, MOIRE - having a wavy pattern, RIPSTOP - woven so that small tears do not spread, and TAMMY - of mixed fibers. Still other definitions take the form “a _____ fabric _____”: KENTE - colorful/made in Ghana, MATTING - woven/used as a floor covering, and SHERPA - soft/for linings.

A standard dictionary would classify METALLIC and NON-WOVEN as adjectives for the primary definition, but they can also be used as nouns: METALLIC is “a fabric or yarn made of or coated with metal” and NONWOVEN is “a fabric not made by weaving.” (By the way, OSPD4 defines ADNOUN as “an adjective when used as a noun.”)

When it comes to fabric-related verbs, some are self-referential.

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NET means “to catch in a net (a type of openwork fabric),” SILK means “to cover with silk (a soft, lustrous fabric),” and TISSUE means “to weave into tissue (a fine sheer fabric).”

I’ll wrap things up (but not in BURLAP or GINGHAM) by reminding you that the SCAM calendar lists several chances for you to play SCRABBLE®.

Next month: *April Shouters*

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one morning in April, 2005 (I believe), I got around to emptying the carton and lo and behold, out sailed the Sultana! With the help of several books on model shipbuilding, plus what plans I had wrapped her in, I managed to finish her. She is a quite respectable “three-foot” model. That’s a model that really looks good from a distance, right up to three feet away. Closer than three feet, you can notice “short cuts” and quick fixes in everything from the rigging to the overall paint scheme. The bug has bitten me and I am now well in to plank-on-bulkhead models and with the guidance of my “Guru” (a master ship model builder) in Palm Bay, I have completed one “Museum quality” model and am presently working on a model of an 18th century Spanish bomb/mortar frigate.

I see, when I look in my LocSec Articles folder, that I started off strong last year doing Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr articles, and then slipped to Jul, Aug, Dec. So what happened? Well, I just ran out of new things to say, and I didn't want to start repeating myself on topics like "Do we want an RG in 2008" or "We have all sorts of unfilled committee positions" or "Is Richard Dawkins really the Antichrist?"

But now there is something new. We have scheduled a new social event on our calendar for April 14. We are calling it Spring Picnic 2007, and would like it to become The Annual Spring Picnic. Even better, if someone could come up with a brilliant name along the lines of Smarti Gras, or ValenTime, or A Space Coast Oddity, we could call it that. Do we need a naming contest? I think not! But suggestions are welcome. But I digress.

I like to think of this event as having the potential for really good attendance, say in the order of 40 or more, somewhere between a good party night of a dozen or so and an actual RG of 90 or more. I mention an RG because it is always in my mind that the loss of our last two RGs, one loss due to weather, and one due to inertia, has in some way lessened the impact of SCAM as an organization. A good turnout for the picnic would be an indication that larger events are still viable and we might start thinking positively about resurrecting our great tradition as exemplified by the 2000 and 2002 RGs, not to mention those of the previous century.

But about the picnic. We have an excellent venue (an increasingly popular word - so much more sophisticated than "place") in Paradise Park, on the beach in Indialantic, recently renovated and nicely appointed. The ExComm is hosting and will supply hot dogs, burgers, sodas, maybe some sausages, maybe some salads, not all details are yet firmed up, but the date, location, and guaranteed good weather are.

The April SCAM will fill in the final details. Also this is a good event for all of us interested in attending to practice the fine art of the RSVP. Not yet of course, but when we hit April and the date approaches it will help the planners to have a decent idea of the numbers they will be feeding. *More on this next month.*

“Stock prices have reached what looks like a permanently high plateau. I do not feel there will be soon if ever a 50 or 60 point break from present levels, such as (bears) have predicted. I expect to see the stock market a good deal higher within a few months.”

- Irving Fisher, Ph.D. in economics, Oct. 17, 1929

This is the week of predictions. Stock brokers, economists, analysts, financial planners and fools of all description are going to tell us what is going to happen in the stock market, the housing bubble, the national and global economies and all other macro and microcosms.

Before you believe any of the pundits it would be a good idea to go back to their previous year’s prediction to see how “right” they were. You will be disappointed. Most of them will be 90% wrong unless their predictions were so broad and sweeping they really meant nothing.

I like the one, “The market is going to go up”. That pleases most folks and is a favorite of about 99% of the brokers. Then they hit you with some wonderful stock to buy.

The consensus for 1973, 1987, 2000 and 1929 was all bullish. One of the worst case scenarios is to have everyone agreeing. When too many are running in the same direction it is the herd of lemmings going over the cliff. You don’t want to run with the pack.

There is a theory called contrary opinion. When I was a floor trader it was one of the most important points of my analysis. If a particular commodity had a reading of 80% bullish I looked for an opportunity to be short or when the bullish consensus went below 40% it was time to look for a buy. When those around me were buying I was selling.

What bothers me about today’s market is the overwhelming complacency that is measured by an indicator called the VIX. It is running about 10 that is at historic lows. It measures the confidence of those who own stock and it seems almost everyone thinks the market has no top and will go up forever. For a contrarian that is a red flag to watch for a change of direction.

In 1929 the market dropped about 90%. In 1973-74 it broke

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SCAM Calendar of Events for March 2007

3rd - Saturday 7:00 PM

PUTT-PUTT & PIE

What could be better on a quiet Florida evening than getting a hole-in-one? Having pie afterwards, of course! Join us at Putt-Putt Golf and then share some pies and golfing stories.

Contact: *Suzanne, 258-5437 for details.*

6:00 pm—SEE BELOW for Dates

MENSA-TABLE

DINNER—March 6 (Tues.): El Charro's, *Cocoa Village.*

BUFFET—March 15 (Thurs.): New Century Buffet, *Merritt Island.*

Contact: *Terry, 626-8523 for details.*

DINNER—March 21 (Wed.): Pumpernickles, *Titusville.*

Contact: *Sue, 626-7838 for details.*

DINNER—March 29 (Thurs.): Cracker Barrel, *Viera.*

Contact: *Cheryl, 723-3496 for details.*

10th - Saturday 9:00 AM

SUE'S "NSS"* NATURE WALK

Meet at the entrance to the Black Point Wildlife Park for a drive/walk in this beautiful natural setting.

Contact: *Sue, 626-7838 for details.*

**("Not-So-Strenuous")*

11th - Sunday 11:00 AM

BRUNCH AT TERRY'S

Be sure to bring your appetites to this one.

Contact: *Terry, 626-8523 for details.*

17th & 24th - Saturday 7:00 PM

GAMES NIGHT

Games Nights. On the 17th at Terry Valek's, and on the 24th at George and Barbara Patterson's.

Contact: *Terry, 626-8523; George, 777-3721, for details.*

31st - Saturday 6:00 PM

S.N.O.R.T.

Join us for some sushi and tempura at The SCAM's best attended event at Miyako's, 1411 S. Harbor City Blvd. (US#1) in Melbourne.

Contact: *George Patterson, 777-3721.*

MEMBERSHIP NOTES

Welcome to SCAM

Arlette Chew
Paul Bisson
David Spong

Welcome Back

Christopher Baker
Jack Thompson
Chris Muir
Milo Zonka
Ellen Lee Owen
Michael Horton
Karen Todd

MARCH BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

1st	Frank Grieco	17th	Janice Axelrod
1st	Kathryn Juarez	17th	Edward Johnson
2nd	Joseph Smith	18th	Ellen Paul
5th	Stephen Schneider	18th	Mark Tietig
5th	David Terry Sr.	20th	William Daffron III
11th	Dennis Schindler	22nd	Jack Harris
15th	Joseph Cona	23rd	Donald Dalton Jr.
16th	Melinda Meers	28th	Cheri Allen
16th	Robert Roth		

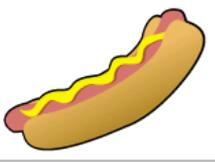
Note: If your birthday is not listed, and you want it to be, please let us know.

Dou will notice that for the first time in a while, we have a full calendar! This is largely thanks to our Calendar Coordinator, our ExComm, and our volunteers who have stepped up to the plate to host these events.

Now is the time to take advantage of these many events—surely, you will find something that is of interest to you.

Just a reminder, in events at members' homes, **please call the host for details**. Please note there is a “kitty” to help defray the host’s expenses, which varies in amount depending on the type of event—you can get this info when contacting the host.

Why not attend an event this month?



Space Coast Area Mensa
presents
Spring Picnic 2007



April 14, 2007

10 a.m. to dusk
Paradise Park, Indialantic
(A1A, 1 mi. south of Eau Gallie)



This event is sponsored by your ExComm.

We have reserved a covered pavilion with picnic tables and benches, grills, water fountain, facilities.

Hot dogs, hamburgers and sodas will be provided and for which there will be a small fee (\$3 -\$5, TBD) Perhaps some salads.

Guests and children are certainly welcome. The location features, of course, the beach, as well as a very nice children's playground and an available volleyball court. There will be cards, dominoes, board games and other such things as people might be induced to bring.

We would really like to see a nice turnout for this event as we move into a more active spring social season. Additional details, such as RSVP'ing, is in the April issue of The SCAM. Contact any ExComm member if you would like to assist in preparations.

One of my joys in life is receiving, in the mail, newsletters and bulletins from various organizations I belong to. Yes, as pointed out in the February SCAM, there is an insidious movement toward e-newsletters going on in our world, and that is why I am not renewing my membership in the Florida Writers Assn. or the Space Coast Writers Guild, both of which suddenly switched to e-newsletters. I would really hate to leave Mensa for the same reason.

It is tacky and dishonest and arbitrary to suddenly switch to e-newsletters when the implicit promise in organizational membership is that the newsletter will be print.

Therefore, I commend our editor, Mike, for refusing to bow to pressure exerted on him to switch to an e-newsletter. I have a computer and I like e-mail, but I like print better.

RVC Maggie Truelove, who promulgated the e idea in her letter in the February issue, said she's surprised that many Mensa members don't take advantage of the many things available on the national website. Well, Maggie, maybe we just don't want to.

But we DO want our print newsletters! Stick to your guns, Mike, and stick to your editor's position, too! You do a great job!

-- Joyce Megginson Kircher

As I sat down to begin my dinner tonight (my wife is on a trip), I grabbed the SCAM and flipped it open. The first thing I saw was your Page Three column, so I began to read. (Notice that nowhere here do I say that I was anywhere near my computer.) I read your column, and a couple of others.

Later tonight, I will continue reading the newsletter, probably as I am sitting in my recliner, or maybe as I go to bed. I may also read an article or so as I am brushing my teeth. I even have been seen reading something as handy as this size newsletter while I use my electric razor.

From the above you may surmise that I wholeheartedly agree with you stance FOR printed newsletters and against e-subscriptions. I believe that we have the best of both when we receive the printed version and can also access the newsletter via the web. The latter addresses the issue that Maggie Truelove mentioned

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in that if she does not receive a copy of the *SCAM* for a particular month, or if it is damaged, she can simply read it on the web.

I do receive announcements of e-newsletters from one of the local Chambers of Commerce. As a rule, I simply delete the announcement and do not read the newsletter. I do read some business newsletters and e-zines, but I do not need my e-mail cluttered up with more. I mostly use my computer for work, so I do not enjoy reading more items on the bright, white screen.

I am an officer of another organization which published a printed newsletter until a little over a year ago. At that time, we lost our two editors, and we could find no one to replace them. As a result, we attempted to go to e-communications. This has been a miserable failure. Admittedly, we did not try an e-newsletter, since that is really as much work as a printed one and the editor to do that work is what is missing. We tried a Wiki to allow two way communication, a more interactive web page and several other means. None have been effective. Our members really miss the updates of the printed newsletter. We do meeting announcements by e-mail, but even so, our attendance and overall membership has dropped off.

In summary, keep up your firm stance. Save the newsletter, save the organization (to paraphrase *Heroes*).

—*J R Staal*

Editor's Note: The following letter, to me via e-mail by the editor of another Mensa local group newsletter, supports using e-newsletters. Unfortunately, he did not say which local group he is with. This has been included to show another perspective on this "e-issue".

About a year ago, we offered our membership the option of receiving the newsletter via e-mail with the advantages of getting it in color and on time, with the advantage of saving our group some money. Roughly 20% of our members elected this option, saving us some money. (We have about 280 members so it doesn't impact our mailing rates). As Editor and Publisher, I will admit that this adds time to my job: I must strip out the labels of those who want the e-mail version but this adds less than an hour to the process. I see it as a plus: we save money that we can better use elsewhere. We have accumulated enough money to do a real blitz that aims to increase our membership by 50% in the next year. Brainstorming is great!

—*Ralph Rudolph*

Some long-time Mensans have observed an unwelcome change of character that has come over our organization in recent years. Newer members may wonder what kind of difference they are talking about.

We were once a society that held dear its unaffiliated status (No commercial tie-ins! None! The selling of our name was unthinkable, in fact) and its essential metaphor of the round table, an Arthurian image that members used to be well enough educated to comprehend: A society wherein all are on an equal footing, members participate freely and voice opinions fearlessly, elected and appointed officers take care of the business of running the organization but are neither governors nor celebrities, the national office staff serves administrative and membership needs under the direction of the AMC and supports but does not oversee or assert authority over any member for any reason, the words “official” and “approval” are hardly ever used in any context, members have ready access to one another (since that is basically all our dues pay for), and pretty much any way that Mensans choose to affiliate with one another through events, publications, gatherings, correspondence, national and local SIGs, etc., is fine as long as it is legal and does not bind or speak for Mensa.

If our society is supposed to be anything, it is that.

I have been accused of being an old-timer pining for the good old days, and there is some truth in that; I miss that earlier Mensa the way I miss the warm and bright family Christmases of my childhood, likewise irrecoverable. But let it be remembered that Mensa politics have been with us practically from day one and that there was never a time when we simply proceeded harmoniously and got things done in the best, most effective, and most principle-respecting way possible. Affection among Mensans was always unevenly distributed. We have been better and we have been worse, but we have never been altogether good.

Right now we are worse.

So when I hark back to the organizational model of earlier times, it is not to express a nostalgic yearning but to plant, I hope, a potent seed of possibility in the minds of younger members who will shape the Mensa of the future, if there is to be a Mensa of the future.

The day after 9/11, when all sorts of emergency measures and extreme strictures were going into effect in panic mode and there

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was no telling what was going to happen to our freedom in the name of an unattainable “security,” I sat my two teenage sons down on the living room sofa and addressed them with every ounce of urgency and conviction in my being. “You must remember: it was not always like this. It was not always like this. You must remember, or how will we ever put it right?”

I don’t believe that all the blame for painful changes can be laid on people who deny or refuse to look at problems in the society. I think the well-meaning and optimistic yea-sayers have been cynically taken advantage of by those with other agendas. But all of us have the obligation to ask questions.

No Mensan should fear to ask questions. No Mensan should fear to voice opinions.

How can fear have any place in Mensa? Fear in Mensa should be viewed as the redness and swelling that tell you where to look for the infection.

Meredy Amyx,

Former editor,

Beacon (Boston), Mensa Bulletin, Editor's Handbook (1982), Intelligencer (SFRM) Member since 1972; life member

“PAGE THREE”

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Such being the case, I’m sure we can appreciate Art Buchwald’s legacy.

On the “home front”, you may notice this issue is somewhat thicker, and our events calendar has a bit more activities than in the recent past. With regard to the newsletter, I appreciate our new writers (who are fast becoming regulars), and continue to encourage you to send in your contributions to this fine epistle.

In at least some issues, I am seeking to publish one item of interest from the community at large. This month, Roger Mansfield, from the City of Melbourne, discusses reclaimed water.

Our activities have increased thanks to the members of our Ex-Comm and the *volunteers* who stepped up in this time of need. *It is now up to you to take advantage of what we have to offer.* Have any ideas or wish to volunteer? Doug Starke would really like to hear from you.

**SPACE
(STILL)
AVAILABLE
INQUIRE WITHIN...**

Several of you have “stepped up” and answered the call for new material to be published in *The SCAM*. We appreciate that, and urge you to keep your contributions coming. For those of you who have not yet done so, this is a reminder that there’s still plenty of room...

To our readers, you may have noticed there are different topics than before as we publish new columns. Why not add to the variety of topics by writing that column you’ve always wanted to write?

We invite writing on just about any topic. For those among us who are poets or writers of fiction, *The SCAM* also has plenty of space. Contributions for cover art are also welcome.

It seemed like a good idea at the time.

Way ago, when the Internet was a new, quirky techtoy, there was this idea of keeping in touch with your old schoolchums and I foolishly signed up. Now, years later, I am still receiving my almost daily dose of spam from these persistent folks. However, in a fit of pique, I was motivated to update the somewhat sketchy profile I had originally submitted, substituting my bland bio with this more provocative memoir:

"Having finally successfully balanced my meds, I no longer need solace from ladies of the night regarding my unusual affinity for llamas. Needless to say, I still miss my furry friends. Especially Velma. She was rather cute, actually.

I was recently honored for my long-standing support of the local Our Lady of Perpetual Sorrow Shelter for Homeless NFL Tailbacks with an impeccably catered sit down lutefisk dinner at which the guest speaker was none other than Billy Joe Bob "Bubba" Swarczynski, the 2003 International Cockroach Stomping Gold Medal Winner. The highlight of the evening was when Sister Mary Magritte, feeling a little frisky after her third cup of punch, knocked out a kick-ass version of Bohemian Rhapsody on her accordion. Needless to say, everyone had a wonderful time and really enjoyed the zircon-encrusted, navel lint pickers I gave out as a door prize.

After the recent break up with my girlfriend of almost three-and-a-half weeks, I was feeling rather despondent until I read an ad in the latest issue of my subscription to Alfalfa Sprout Sculptures Weekly, describing a rare opportunity to join the growing number of people who weave pork loins into their hair. I had a little difficulty filling out the 23-page application, particularly with the details of all of my assets, since I didn't have the information regarding all the account numbers and passwords easily at hand. However, I managed to finally provide all the requested information and sent it in, along with my cashier's check for \$4,625.11, and I anticipate receiving my Sooper Sekrit Majik Decoder Ring within 4-6 weeks. Needless to say, I am very excited!

Last year's operation to remove an upright piano from my pituitary gland left me with a peculiar side-effect which did not allow me

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40%. During both those times there was only one group of stocks that went up several hundred percent - the gold mining companies.

Today there are both mutual funds and exchange traded funds (ETFs) that represent gold which makes it much easier to invest in the metal. Gold coins are also an acceptable investment.

As long as the market continues to make new highs Wall Street market mavens will be heroes. Back in 1990's everyone was a genius until 2000 when the NASDAQ broke 78%. It wasn't pretty. There was no reason for anyone to lose a large sum of money with a simple 10% stop loss in place.

I don't know what mysteries 2007 will bring, but I will predict that anyone without an exit strategy is going to have a bad year.

Al Thomas' best selling book, "If It Doesn't Go Up, Don't Buy It!" has helped thousands of people make money and keep their profits with his simple 2-step method. Read the first chapter and receive his market letter for 3 months at no charge at www.mutualfundmagic.com and discover why he's the man that Wall Street does not want you to know. Copyright 2007 All rights reserved.

A Mensan in the family?

Are you the Mensan in your family? Or, is your spouse, child, parent or sibling the Mensan in your household? Are two or more (maybe all) in your household Mensans? If any of these apply, The SCAM is soliciting an article from *you*. All members of SCAM or family members are invited to respond. What are your impressions and experiences?

Once again our Fearless Leader has spoken. As I write this column, a little more than a week has passed since the President’s annual State of the Union Address. This time, the President appeared to focus more on domestic issues. If nothing else, our Commander-in-Chief does have a sense of humor as evidenced by his statement, *“First, we must balance the federal budget. We can do so without raising taxes. What we need is impose spending discipline in Washington D.C.”* Exactly six years ago, when George W. Bush assumed the Presidency, the federal budget had a sizeable *surplus*. Surely he jests...or did we all forget?

One domestic issue, again the subject of this column, is how we should resolve our country’s health care crisis. The cost of health care still continues to rise, while increasing numbers of Americans continue to find themselves without health care coverage. According to the U. S. Census, as of 2005 (the latest available figures), the number of uninsured Americans is 46.6 *million*. Almost two-thirds of that number (29.6 million) are in households with total annual income of less than \$50,000. Slightly more than half of *that* number (14.6 million) are in households where the total annual income is less than \$25,000.⁽¹⁾ The median household income of all Americans as of 2005 is \$46,326.⁽²⁾

The solution, our President declared last year, was for us to open and maintain “Health Savings Accounts” (HSAs) to take care of our health care needs. This would happen through the alleged tax advantages an HSA offers. In last year’s column (March 2006 *SCAM*), I offered a brief description of an HSA. Despite last year’s prescription by the “Doctor-in Chief”, the symptoms, and evidently the disease, still persists. Time for yet another prescription. Yes, he still recommends HSAs, but this year’s focus is on a new plan.

The new plan, in “Doc’s” own words: *“First, I propose a standard tax deduction for health insurance... Families with health insurance will pay no income ... on payroll taxes on \$15,000 of their income... For Americans who now purchase health insurance on their own, this proposal would mean substantial tax savings... For the millions of other Americans who have no health insurance at all, this deduction would help put a basic private health insurance plan within their reach...”*⁽³⁾

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Is this so, will “Dr. W’s Rx” work this time? Let’s find out. As it is tax time, I shall prepare a 2006 tax return for the Medians, our mythical family of four with the median household income of \$46,326. We met them last year: Mike still works as a manager at Midland Bank. Mike has contributed \$3500 to his company 401(k) plan. His wife, Midge, is a part-time secretary at the Midway Christian Church. Their two children, Heather, is now 11, and Justin is now 13.

For their 2006 tax return, there are two W-2 forms totaling \$42,826 (Mike’s \$3500 contribution to the 401(k) is excluded). They have no other income, and will not be itemizing deductions. The standard deduction is \$10,300; they have 4 exemptions of \$3300 each (total exemption: \$13,200). \$42,826 minus \$23,500 equals \$19,326, their taxable income. Using the Tax Tables provided with their Form 1040, their tax is \$2144.⁽⁴⁾ Next, the Child Tax Credit is applied (\$1000 each child). The \$2000 subtracted brings their total tax liability to \$144.

The Medians have no health insurance. Mike is offered a health plan for about \$12,000 for a year of coverage. This is close to the average price for such insurance. At \$1000 per month, it is also not affordable to the Medians. Enter “Dr. W.”, will his prescription work this year? The HSA idea didn’t work out, but this is different...or is it?

The proposed \$15,000 “health standard deduction” would result in a tax savings for the Medians: all \$144 in taxes would be wiped out. This would bring the net cost for the health plan to \$11,856, a monthly savings of \$12. If the Medians cannot afford \$1000 each month, would they now be able to afford the bargain basement price of \$988 per month? Not likely.

What about their fellow citizens (in this case, real Americans), especially the half of the American population with lower income than the Medians that represent the overwhelming majority of uninsured Americans? Where is the benefit to them? Once again, I believe we’ve been had. At this point, perhaps we should sue “Dr. W.” for malpractice in dispensing bogus (and dangerous) prescriptions. Sadly, we cannot, as “tort reform” is now the law of the land...in the name of containing health care costs!

Can we talk about a real solution yet?

Sources:

1. U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Reports,

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- P60-231, *Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2005*, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 2005.
2. *Economic Statistics Briefing Room*, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/fsbr/income.html> (printed 1/30/2007).
 3. President Bush Delivers State of the Union Address: www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/01/print/20070123-2.html (printed 1/24/2007)
 4. Internal Revenue Service, *2006 (Form) 1040: Forms and Instructions*. Includes Tax Tables.

My Summer Vacation:

CLASSMATES

Continued

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to correctly enunciate the word "coffee." Just last week, I went out for breakfast and the waitress asked me what I'd like to drink with my starfish-on-toast, and instead of replying with 'coffee' the only thing that would come out of my mouth was "I hope you die of a lingering, festering disease which causes your private parts to become a pustulous tumor." Needless to say, I am no longer welcome at that restaurant.

But despite the disappointment of not being selected for the job I applied for as VP in charge of Spurious Operations for Haliburton's Iraq Division, I manage to stay quite busy updating my list of people who have visible nose hair. Needless to say, I can always parlay franchise options on my list to unsuspecting Bulgarians who limp.

So, although I only eat pre-masticated armadillo giblets, you can plainly see that I am quite happy and fulfilled in my role as consigliere to the Council of Aging Gnome Contortionists. Needless to say, the caption under the place in my High School Yearbook where my picture was supposed to be read 'Deliberately Omitted.'"

the george

I have never let my schooling interfere with my education.

- Mark Twain

Thank you, Region 10! I am reelected due to there being no opposing candidate. You sure make it easy for me!

In case you haven't heard yet, at the January AMC meeting, a motion was passed that will give local groups 10 cents more per member per month, as well as 57 cents more per second member in the household per month. And did I mention that there are no strings on how the local group uses their funds? I am very proud of this motion passing, as I was on the Local Group Funding Task Force that worked for many months, examining local group finances and whether or not local groups needed more money and so on. I am also proud of the AMC for approving our motion.

Another issue that came up before the AMC at the January meeting is the Local Group Charter. This motion was tabled until March for a couple of reasons. First, many on the AMC felt that the wording needed some polishing. Second, and perhaps more importantly, some of us felt that the concept of the Local Group Charter needed to be clarified for the membership, some of whom have expressed that they felt it was a move toward control by the AMC. And that's not what it is, at all. In actuality, the Local Group Charter is just codifying the relationship that is already in place between national and local groups. It explains what is expected of the local group and what is expected of national. In my opinion, this would be especially useful each time a new LocSec takes office. It would give them a blueprint to follow. If you are unsure of that, I think you will be able to download a copy from the national website and read it for yourself.

If you missed Smarti Gras and Valente this winter, you may be well into RG withdrawal. But take heart, because the Tampa Bay ARRR RG is approved and on the calendar. It is coming up on Memorial Day weekend. And while we are talking RGs, Broward Mensa's RG - FLoRanGe a trois - is moving . . . from October to Labor Day weekend! Just think, two three day RGs in a row! What more could a region want?

March 25-26 is the next AMC meeting. As always, the agenda for that meeting will be available on the national website for you to read. If you have comments to share about any of the issues coming before the board, please do email or call me or another AMC member.

Maggie Truelove
rvc10@cfl.rr.com or truluvs@cfl.rr.com
3333 Honeysuckle Lane
Orlando, Florida 32812
407-855-9078

The ExComm met at the home of George Patterson on Wednesday, February 7, 2007. Called to order at 6:32pm by LocSec George Patterson.

Members present: George Patterson, Joe Smith, Terry Valek, and Thomas Wheat . Bud Long was unable to attend.

Welcome Guests: None.

Minutes of the January 3 meeting, as published in the February 2007 SCAM, were approved unanimously.

Officer Reports:

LocSec: George reported that the reservation date for the pavilion at Paradise park, the site of the Spring picnic, was changed from April 21 to April 14 to avoid a conflict with Mensa Mindgames, and consequently, the date for the picnic, which had been tentatively scheduled for the 21st is now fixed as April 14. (See picnic ad elsewhere in this issue.)

Treasurer: Bud submitted the January Treasurer's Report by email. The report is shown below.

Testing: Helen Lee Moore (proctor coordinator) reported by email that a testing session was scheduled for January, but no one appeared.

Committee Reports: There were no committee reports.

Old Business: There was no old business.

New Business: There was no new business.

The move to adjourn was passed by unanimous vote at 6:42 pm, The next meeting of the ExComm is scheduled for Wednesday, March 7, at 5:30 pm at George Patterson's house, 301 Sand Pine Road, Indialantic. (321-777-3721)

SCAM TREASURER'S REPORT

Bud Long, Treasurer

Status as of January 31, 2007:

General Fund:	\$543.46
Post Office Account:	\$106.83
Reserve Fund:	\$3,098.18

Deposits:

Mensa Funding:	\$109.03
Bank Interest:	1.31

Total Funds Available: **\$3,748.47**

Withdrawals:

Printing Costs:	\$139.71
Postage:	67.76
Park Deposit:	53.00